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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Twenty-seventh session of the Commission/
eighteenth meeting of the Conference of
Ministers

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
20-24 April 1992

ISSUES FROM THE SUBSIDIARY ORGANS AND SECTORAL BODIES OF THE COMMISSION CALLING FOR ACTION BY THE CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS

This document contains resolutions brought to the attention of the Commission or calling for action on the part of the Commission, which have been adopted by its subsidiary organs since its last session, and which are not otherwise the subject of separate items on the agenda of the present meeting.

I. ISSUES BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE COMMISSION

1. The following issues are recorded for the interest of the Commission, but do not require any action on its part:

A. Fourth meeting of the Conference of Ministers responsible for Human Resources Planning, Development and Utilization
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 18-23 November 1991

2. The Conference adopted the following resolution:

Resolution 1/91

The Conference of Ministers Responsible for Human Resources Planning, Development and Utilization.

Recalling the recommendations made and the resolutions adopted at its third meeting as well as the decisions taken at its fourth meeting on the need to intensify efforts to improve on human conditions and human resources development within the continent and to intensify efforts to monitor the status of human resources planning, development and utilization in Africa,

Conscious of the many laudable initiatives taken by African Governments, non-governmental organizations and the international community at large to assist in the development and more effective utilization of human resources in African countries,

Noting with regret that in spite of these efforts and initiatives, the indicators of human development have continued to worsen,

Aware of the nefarious consequences of such trends on Africa's prospects for socio-economic transformation and development in the long term,

1. Urges African Governments to give priority to the human dimension and to the implementation of an integrated approach to human resources planning, development and utilization, particularly as expressed in the Regional Framework for Human Resources Development and Utilization in Africa;

2. Urges further all African Governments to redouble their efforts and make the necessary resource allocations to improve the quality of education at all levels, to increase the relevance of education, training and research in their institutions of higher learning in furtherance of the transformation and sustained development of their economies, to promote the growth of employment in all sectors of their economies, to re-build development executive capacities, and to stem the tide of the brain drain, and undertake reforms in higher education;

3. Commends the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Human Resources Development and Utilization for the elaboration of the Regional Framework for Human Resources Development and Utilization in Africa and calls on it to intensify its efforts for the coordination of United Nations activities at the regional level in the field human resources development and utilization;

4. Calls upon the international community and the United Nations agencies to give full support to the strategy and priorities espoused in the Regional Framework for Human Resources Development and Utilization in Africa, make greater use of local consultants and expertise in development projects funded by them; and urges the United Nations Development Programme to implement the pilot programme on integrated human resources development;

5. Requests the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa to intensify the Commission's efforts to assist African Governments in strengthening their human resources planning, development and utilization capacities;

6. Further requests the Executive Secretary of the Commission to pursue, with vigour, the various measures instituted to assist in reversing the brain drain, especially the Economic Commission for Africa/International Organization for Migration Return of Skills Programme for Africa, and to promptly implement the regional programme for the exchange of African experts on a pilot basis;

7. Calls upon the Intergovernmental Organization for Migration to increase its support to the Return of Skills Programme for Africa operated by the Commission within the regional framework set by African Governments; and also to contribute resources to the Commission's regional programme for the exchange of African experts.

B. Fourth meeting of the Conference of African Ministers of Finance
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 17-18 December 1991

3. The Conference adopted the following resolutions:

Resolution I (IV)

The African debt crisis

The fourth session of the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 17 and 18 December 1991,

Recalling that the African Common Position on Africa's External Indebtedness adopted by the extraordinary summit of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity held in December 1987 remains the framework without which no lasting solution to the African debt problem can be achieved,*

Recalling further that the African debt crisis persists notwithstanding the various economic programmes undertaken by member countries, at times, at great socio-economic and political cost,

Noting that notwithstanding the various debt-relief initiatives that have been so far announced to alleviate the debt burden of African countries, the debt crisis still persists and constitutes a major obstacle to the socio-economic recovery of the African continent as a whole,

Aware that although some laudable initiatives have been announced by creditor countries, these, to a large extent, remain unimplemented and have been discriminatory against middle-income countries which continue to suffer from indebtedness,

Convinced that a lasting solution to Africa's external debt crisis remains necessary for the sustained recovery of African economies,

1. Welcomes the decision of the new Secretary-General of the United Nations to make alleviation of the debt burden of the poorest countries of the world a major priority area for the United Nations during his term of office;

* Adopted with reservations from the delegation of Morocco.

2. Further welcomes the initiative of the Acting Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa for having organized the Africa Debt Day in New York in October 1991 which proved a useful forum for impressing upon the international community the persistence of Africa's external indebtedness;

3. Calls upon African Governments to devote greater effort to debt management at the national level, while at the same time taking care not to marginalize the contribution of certain important segments of the international community, especially influential citizens, government officials and prominent persons from creditor countries in resolving the debt issue;

4. Requests the Executive Secretary of the Commission to continue in his efforts to make the African/African-American Forum and other like-minded organizations, important avenues for bringing African economic and social issues to the attention of the international community;

5. Further requests the Executive Secretary of the Commission, in collaboration with the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity, the President of the African Development Bank and the Director General of the African Centre for Monetary Studies, to continue to provide technical assistance to African countries at their request with a view to enabling them to find a durable solution to the debt problem in its totality including that of African middle-income countries;

6. Calls upon the Executive Secretary of the Commission to report to the next meeting of the Conference of African Ministers of Finance on new initiatives that will have been taken to deal with the African debt problem (including debts owed to multilateral institutions) within a framework which establishes a linkage between debt, trade and development.

Resolution 2 (IV)

The role of indigenous banking and financial institutions in the mobilization of financial resources for development

The fourth session of the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 17 and 18 December 1991,

Concerned that most of the African financial institutions operating in Africa have been ineffective in mobilizing financial resources to finance the development process on the continent,

Further concerned that the imbalances between the volume of savings and investment requirements remain large in most African countries and have perpetuated the overdependence of African countries on external development financing,

Aware that the low level of domestic savings in Africa is partly due to the low levels of per capita income in most African countries, inadequate financial networks and substantial budget deficits incurred to finance unproductive investments,

Further aware of the need for complementarity between the implementation of broad macro-economic adjustment policies (such as economic liberalization and privatization policies) with a view to broadening and deepening financial intermediation in Africa so as to secure effective resource mobilization,

1. Calls upon African countries to put in place appropriate policies that will raise real incomes and savings of the African people, especially in rural areas, as well as implement financial reform programmes aimed at broadening and deepening the financial intermediation process;

2. Invites African countries, with the technical support of the Executive Secretary, if called upon, to carry out case studies with a view to identifying and eliminating obstacles to the mobilization of domestic and external resources for financing economic development in Africa and thereby reduce the continent's overdependence on external resources to finance this process.

Resolution 3 (IV)

Anticipated impact of new developments in the European Monetary System (EMS)
on the monetary and financial arrangements of African countries
and the need to accelerate monetary integration in Africa

The fourth session of the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 17 and 18 December 1991,

Noting the rapid pace of monetary and financial integration currently taking place in the European Economic Community and the decision by the Community members to adopt a single European currency by the year 1999,

Considering that these developments will have an impact on the monetary and financial arrangements of African countries by virtue of the relationships between the African economies and those of countries of the European Economic Community,

Mindful of the importance of coordinated monetary and financial policies in the integration process and aware of the debilitating impact of uncoordinated monetary policies on Africa's economic integration process,

Recalling the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community and in particular its provisions on monetary integration,

Taking note of the preliminary analysis undertaken by the secretariat of the Economic Commission for Africa to evaluate the impact of these new developments in the European Monetary System on the major macro-economic variables of African economies,

Further taking note of the possible impending association of the CFA Franc Zone in the new arrangements of the European Monetary System,

1. Calls upon the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa, the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity, the President of the African Development Bank and the Director-General of the African Centre for Monetary Studies to assist member States in monitoring the evolution of the international monetary systems, including the European Monetary System, and in evaluating their possible impact on the macro-economic variables and integration of African countries;

2. Also calls upon African countries to accelerate the ratification of the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community and to ensure the speedy implementation of its provisions on monetary integration.

II. ISSUES CALLING FOR ACTION BY THE COMMISSION

4. The following issues require the action of the Commission. In the case where there are financial implications involved in the action, a separate "Programme Budget Implications" (PBI) document will be distributed to the meeting:

A. Second ordinary meeting of the Governing Board of the United Nations
African Institute for the Prevention of Crime
and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFRI)
Kampala, Uganda, 16-18 May 1991

5. The second meeting of the Governing Board of UNAFRI proposed and adopted the following amendments to the Statute of the Institute:

1. ARTICLE V

Governing Board: Composition and functions

Presently reads:

1. The Governing Board shall consist of:
 - (a) The Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (hereinafter referred to as "the Executive Secretary"), or his representative, who shall be ex-officio chairman of the Governing Board;

To now read:

1. The Governing Board shall consist of:
 - (a) The Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (hereinafter referred to as "the Executive Secretary"), or his representative, who shall be ex-officio chairman of the Governing Board as representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations;

2. ARTICLE IX

Financial resources of the Institute

Presently reads:

1. The Institute shall derive its financial resources from annual contributions made by member States as determined by the Conference of Ministers and from voluntary contributions by donors.

To now read:

1. Without any prejudice to possible financing of core staff and recurrent operations of the Institute from the regular budget of the United Nations, the Institute shall derive its financial resources from annual contributions made by member States as determined by the Conference of Ministers and from voluntary contributions by donors.

Action of the Conference of Ministers

6. The Conference is requested to endorse the changes submitted by the Governing Board.

B. Seventh meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts
for Science and Technology Development (IGCESTD)

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 4-8 November 1991

7. The seventh meeting brought for adoption the following resolution:

Establishment of a Conference of African Ministers of
Science and Technology for Development

The Conference of Ministers.

Recalling Commission resolution 248 (X1) of 22 February 1973 by which it established the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts for Science and Technology Development,

Recalling also its resolution 385 (XV) which opened the membership of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts for Science and Technology Development to all African member States,

Noting the special appeal in operative paragraph 4 which called on member States to designate focal points for the work of the Intergovernmental Committee and to ensure continuity in their representation on the Committee,

Recognizing that since the establishment of the Committee in 1973, the issues of science and technology in the region have grown rapidly in importance and complexity, and that there is a desire for a coordinated approach in tackling these issues among the member States,

Recognizing that in view of the priority being given to science and technology as an essential tool for the proper exploitation of Africa's natural resources, many member States have set up Ministries of Science and Technology and the number of such ministries has increased,

Recalling that the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community which was signed by the African leaders at the Organization of African Unity Summit in Abuja, in June 1991, places considerable emphasis on the role of science and technology in the future development of the African continent, and calls for specific actions to strengthen the technological capacities of the member States and to promote technological self-reliance,

Convinced that the attainment of the objectives of the science and technology component of the African Economic Community will require concerted effort between the Organization of African Unity, the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Development Bank and contributions from the African intergovernmental science and technology institutions, and relevant international organizations in the development and consolidation of common strategies and policies,

1. Urges the Governments of African countries to take explicit measures, individually and collectively, to build up their endogenous capacities in science and technology;

2. Urges also the Governments of African countries to participate effectively in the subregional and regional initiatives with a view to achieve the science and technology targets in the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community;

3. Decides to establish a Conference of African Ministers responsible for science and technology for development to ensure the required political and financial support to the work of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts for Science and Technology Development, and to provide the forum for development and appraisal of concerted national and regional strategies and programmes for promoting

science and technology in the socio-economic development of member States, and calls upon the General Secretariat of the Organization of African Unity to cooperate in the implementation of this resolution;

4. Decides that the Conference of Ministers of Science and Technology for Development should meet every two years in conjunction with the meetings of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts.

Action of the Conference of Ministers

8. The Conference is being requested to endorse the establishment of a Conference of Ministers of Science and Technology for Development. This will have financial implications for the regular budget of the Commission. Any decision in this regard must be put before the Economic and Social Council for approval, and subsequently presented to the General Assembly, both for alterations in the structure of the Commission, and for the resources requested through the 1994-1995 programme budget. In the event that member States wish to avoid those financial implications, some other Conferences of Ministers under the Commission's structure may be considered for abolition or consolidation.